



Campus-Community Task Force on Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Initial Recommendations December 2020

I. BACKGROUND

In July 2020, USF's St. Petersburg campus and community leaders in St. Petersburg and Pinellas County convened a Task Force to explore how we can bridge our efforts to address inequalities that exist in our city and county. Since then, Task Force members met monthly to discuss current initiatives, as well as gaps that might present opportunities for collaboration.

The purpose of the Task Force is to serve as a bridge between the St. Petersburg and Pinellas community and the USF St. Petersburg campus that will bring forward recommendations and priorities that have a lasting, positive impact on our campus and extended community of citizens in the areas of diversity, inclusion and equity.

Task Force members established the following objectives:

- Increase representation of people of color at USF's St. Petersburg campus among staff, faculty, students, and business suppliers
- Increase accessibility to higher education for students of color
- Strengthen campus engagement with the community around diversity, inclusion, and equity practices.
- Create a program(s) or initiative(s) to have a lasting, positive impact on our campus and community

As 2020 ends, the Task Force wishes to bring forward the following initial recommendations and initiatives.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Increase Admissions Enrollments for Underrepresented Students

The Task Force explored how to attract more students from underrepresented groups to apply and get admitted to the USF St. Petersburg campus. We want St. Petersburg residents to know this is their campus and that there are many pathways to enroll. We wish to work with K-12 schools and find more opportunities for middle and high schoolers to visit USF's St. Petersburg campus. Hence, the Task Force endorses the following recommendations to increase enrollment and expand opportunities for students of color:

Objective One: Extend and communicate application window

- Expand the Guaranteed Admissions Pathway Partnership (GAPP) to all potential incoming first year underrepresented students who attend Pinellas County Schools (Black, Hispanic, free/reduced lunch).
- Extend the GAPP application window to January 31st annually.



- Provide marketing materials designed to communicate the GAPP and traditional application windows to Pinellas County high schools no later than the end of July annually which include:
 - the minimum academic requirements for acceptance through the GAPP in these marketing materials;
 - the average academic requirements for the traditional application window at various times of the completed application (October application, December application, February application, and April application); and
 - a detailed listing of all components a student needs to submit to have their application considered complete.

Objective Two: Diversify academic acceptance criteria

- Maintain the current Grade Point Average (GPA) academic requirements of 3.7+ core weighted GPA and 1100+ SAT or 22+ composite ACT (sliding scales).
- Consider the removal of assessment criteria (SAT/ACT) for students who demonstrate academic success in college courses taken during HS (AP, DE, Cambridge, IB).

Objective Three: Strengthen on campus support for high schools

- Increase on-campus support (individual and/or in small group) for seniors and second semester juniors.
- Create (or expand) a monthly data sharing USFSP admissions/application status report with high school counseling/administrative staff (perhaps one point of contact for each high school needs to be developed, if it does not already exist).

b. Create a St. Petersburg Higher Education Consortium for Racial Justice

Higher education institutions in St. Petersburg have expressed interest in collaborating in the area of racial justice and are exploring a framework created by the Kellogg Foundation called Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation, or TRHT. The Association of American Colleges and Universities is partnering with higher education institutions to prepare the next generation of strategic leaders to break down racial hierarchies through the TRHT framework, and community collaborations around this framework exist nationwide with support from the Kellogg Foundation. Twenty-four universities already host campus centers around the country and there are 14 TRHT community collaborations. The Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg will issue a planning grant to explore the creation of a center that will bring together regional higher education institutions interested in focusing on systemic changes to dismantle racial hierarchies within their institutions, as well as the community at-large. Interested institutions include: USF St. Petersburg campus, St. Petersburg College, Stetson University School of Law, and Eckerd College. The Task Force enthusiastically endorses this effort.

c. Collaboration with the City of St. Petersburg's Urban Affairs Department

Finally, USF St. Petersburg campus wants to serve the community and create a sense of inclusion for students of color on campus. The campus' Committee to Serve Underrepresented Students and the City's Department of Urban Affairs are collaborating on several initiatives to:



- Increase a sense of belonging and visibility of faculty, staff, and community members of color, while simultaneously exploring the lived experience of being underrepresented and the resiliency lessons gained through that experience.
- Increase campus presence in the community through engagement with the City's My Brother's and Sister's Keepers initiative and the Cohort of Champions training program, which offer mentoring, support networks, and skills training young people need to find a good job or go to college.

As members of the Campus-Community Task Force on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, we enthusiastically endorse these efforts, and look forward to finding continued avenues for collaboration.

- John W. Arthur, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, Frank E. Duckwall Professorship in Florida Studies (2020-2022), USFSP
- Duggan Cooley, CEO, Community Foundation of Pinellas County
- Jacob Diaz, Ed.D, Regional Assistant Vice Chancellor for Student Success & Dean of Students, USFSP
- Lillian Dunlap, Ph.D., Executive Director, Your Real Stories, Inc.
- Byron Green, Ed.D., Associate Director, Housing and Residential Education
- Tashika Griffith, Ed.D., Provost, St. Petersburg College Downtown and Midtown Center
- Lawrence Hamilton, Campus Board Member, USFSP
- Patti Helton, Ph.D., Regional Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs and Student Success, USFSP
- Cecil Howard, J.D., Associate Vice President, Chief Diversity Officer, USF
- Dwayne Isaacs, Director of Student Life and Engagement, USFSP
- Carl Lavender, Chief Equity Officer, Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg
- Michelle Madden, Ed.D., Campus Diversity Officer, USFSP
- Julie Rocco, Senior Community Engagement Advocate, Foundation for a Healthy St. Petersburg
- Mhariel Summers, Black Engagement Coordinator for Representative Charlie Crist
- Martin Tadlock, Ph.D., Regional Chancellor, USFSP
- Micki Thompson, Chief Executive Officer, 211 Tampa Bay Cares
- Kanika Tomalin, Ph.D., Deputy Mayor and City Administrator, City of St. Petersburg
- Michael Vigie, Principal, The Boca Ciega High School